

Interactive Access Control Solutions

Self-Service Safety

Rich Germain had a closer look




Global pharmaceutical and chemical giant Merck of Darmstadt, Germany, has employed the latest kiosk technology to boost its internal safety and security initiatives. Merck has always had stringent safety standards in place at its chemical production facilities – all visitors and contractors must be informed about potential dangers and enforced regulations, with only those that pass a comprehensive test on the subjects gaining access to Merck facilities.

Since the end of July 2005 external workers have been using new automated safety instruction terminals to obtain their access passes, a self-service solution developed by time management and access control specialist MBB Gelma, kiosk manufacturer Polygon and engineering specialist Rase-mann. The terminal software provides fully automated safety instructions at the entrance to the facilities, allowing the user to see TV-quality instruction movies at the touch of a screen. Through pictures and sounds, the movie illustrates all relevant safety issues clearly and comprehensively and it is impossible for the user to interfere while the instruction is playing, unless they are authorised to do so. At the end of the presentation the user is given a test concerning the safety issues to make sure he or she fully understands them. The system then assesses their knowledge level and, provided the user passes the relevant tests, issues them with the required access pass. Coded RFID technology is used to transmit the access permissions onto the employee's or outside staff member's files.

Tailor Made for Teaching

The checkPOInt II standard terminal by Polygon operates as the basis for the enclosure and hardware concept, although a series of tailor-made



specifications have been implemented in the Merck project to combine the cost savings of a standard terminal with the strength of a tailor-made kiosk engineering solution. The terminals and enclosures have been designed for maximum flexibility, with the entire inner side of the front door divided into different encasing segments that can be easily modified or exchanged, leaving plenty of scope for future hardware upgrades.

The kiosks have been fitted with flexible standing supports, which allow the user to interact with the terminal for any length of time without feeling weary or uncomfortable, and a glass wall separation has been provided for

privacy. The entire training package is available in multi-language versions, using integrated directional sound 'showers' from Sonus GmbH, which project audio information solely to the kiosk user, ensuring no sound leaks out to the immediate surroundings. Smart help menus ensure maximum ease of use, making misuse of the system next to impossible.

Just days after the start of operation, responsible safety officers and users have praised the high flexibility and quality of the new training software and have adapted it to their own work processes. Initial evaluations show that acceptance by outside members of staff is also very high indeed –

“Long waiting times and a lot of coordinating to instruct the different employees and external members of staff according to their individual requirements using different seminar rooms are things of the past.” says Merck’s project director Mr Ditter. “The new self-service terminal solution allows us to run training sessions at any time. Both the number of sessions that can take place simultaneously, and the quality of those sessions, has thoroughly improved.”



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